

23 April 1975


The Honorable James R. Schlesinger
The Secretary of Defense

Jim:

Following up our conversation this afternoon, attached is a summary of the evidence suggesting that one of North Vietnam's principal motives at this point may be to humiliate the U.S. Essentially, we believe Hanoi is taking certain actions which are not militarily necessary for the defeat of Saigon, but which could well be intended to make it impossible for the U.S. to leave South Vietnam with even a shred of dignity.

If the North Vietnamese in fact do intend to force the U.S. to evacuate in panic, leaving behind practically all of its South Vietnamese friends, the North Vietnamese could make the evacuation even of the remaining Americans (alone) a messy and bloody undertaking. They are or soon will be physically capable of interdicting both air and sea movement. They can probably prevent the latter and make the former a very hazardous exercise in which some planes are sure to be shot down. Also, even heavy sapper activity inside Saigon, let alone actual attack by conventional forces pressing on its outskirts, could quickly produce a Danang-type panic, which would be a nightmare resembling the innermost circle of Dante's Inferno. In rage and desperation, at least some Vietnamese could be almost certain to vent their frustrations on whatever Americans happen to be handy or within their range of vision.

A representative example of the North Vietnamese statements alluded to in the attached note is the also appended 22 April commentary printed in Quan Doi Nhan Dan. This is Hanoi's daily military paper.


George J. Carver, Jr.

Deputy for National Intelligence Officers

Attachments

As Stated

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23 April 1975

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Possible North Vietnamese Intention to Humiliate the
United States

1. As the Communists press closer to dealing the GVN a final military defeat, there is a spectre that they may attempt to inflict an open humiliation on the United States evacuation process. The evidence on this matter is not conclusive, and much of it can be explained in terms of what the Communists would be doing in any case in preparing for a final military push against Saigon. In any event, the particular items which are possibly germane on this subject are:

- The attempt to move SA-2 missiles into Military Region 3 which could be used to restrict the use of Tan Son Nhut Airbase.
- The probable detection of a FIRE CAN radar about eight miles from Tan Son Nhut which would indicate that the Communists have AAA weapons in the area.
- Three or four incidents of ground fire against aircraft taking off from Tan Son Nhut, and the sighting of what may have been a SA-7 firing against one US plane.
- ARVN intercepts of Communist messages suggesting that a three-pronged attack against Tan Son Nhut may be imminent.
- The movement of Communist forces down the Vietnamese coastline toward Vung Tau; its capture would largely deny the use of the Saigon River as an evacuation route.
- Statements in Communist broadcasts and propaganda that while the Americans could easily depart South Vietnam, the US is moving ships and aircraft into the area in numbers far in excess of what is needed. The Communists describe this as a perfidious trick to "force" the evacuation of Vietnamese -- a ploy which the Communists would resist.

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2. None of this information necessarily reflects a Communist decision to somehow impede or prevent the US evacuation process. Nonetheless, taken as a whole, these indications point toward the possibility that the Communists are trying to create conditions whereby the US evacuation is carried out under conditions that make it impossible to extract any significant numbers of Vietnamese -- that is, a situation where it would be evident to all concerned that the US was forced to flee under duress and in panic.

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A number of Western news agencies also presented Tran Van Hung's biography, pointing out that he was appointed by the U.S.-backed clique as Saigon prefect late in 1964 and was authorized by Johnson to serve as a puppet prime minister from November 1964 to January 1965, when the United States shifted from the special war to the limited war and sent U.S. troops to directly invade the southern part of our country. Early in 1969, Nixon once again appointed Tran Van Hung puppet prime minister. Since 1967, Hung has been like Thieu's shadow.

QUAN DOI NHAN DAN: FORD MUST WITHDRAW AMERICANS IMMEDIATELY

Hanoi in Vietnamese to Vietnam 2200 GMT 21 Apr 75

[QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 22 April commentary: "The Best Way Is To Immediately, Quickly and Completely Bring the Americans Home"]

[Text] The Ford administration is making a fuss about the evacuation of the Americans and those Vietnamese "collaborating with the United States." The White House has repeatedly sent representatives to Congress to testify and request appropriations for the evacuation. The U.S. State Department and the Pentagon have made this an issue in their daily briefings. The White House has put U.S. troops in Hawaii on alert and openly stated that nine carriers and destroyers, including the Enterprise, Midway, Hancock, and Coral Sea, the helicopter carrier Okinawa, and four destroyers carrying some 4,000 U.S. Marines, were moving toward the waters of South Vietnam, "ready to participate in the evacuation of Americans."

The Ford administration is purposely making a great fuss over this in order to get additional aid for the U.S. lackey clique in Saigon so it can continue the war and sabotage the Paris agreement, and, more dangerously, so the United States can use this as a pretext for continuing its military involvement and intervention in South Vietnam in the hope of checking the offensives and uprisings of the South Vietnamese troops and people and averting the collapse of its lackey clique.

Clearsighted U.S. public opinion points out that the Ford administration, while talking about the evacuation of Americans, is actually trying to maintain U.S. military advisers in the guise of civilians, using whatever pretext to delay the withdrawal of the Americans. This lie by the Ford administration has been exposed by the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee which has denounced the Ford administration for making roundabout arguments concerning the withdrawal of Americans. Far from bringing them home, Ford has increased the number of Americans in Saigon many times over what it was in the 10 days prior to 16 April, UPI reported on 18 April.

It must also be pointed out that in sending U.S. military personnel disguised as civilians to operate secretly and illegally in South Vietnam over the past 2 years, the U.S. administration has seriously violated the Paris agreement. If the United States had thoroughly respected and scrupulously implemented the Paris agreement immediately after it was signed, there would be no question of the evacuation of Americans such as is now being raised.

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Now, the Ford administration is using the pretext of evacuating Americans and Vietnamese collaborators as part of its plan to become even more deeply involved militarily in South Vietnam. This is a new, very serious violation of the Paris agreement.

Everyone knows that the evacuation of only about 4,000 U.S. military advisers from Saigon, as the U.S. administration has put it, which has prompted the Ford administration to send as many as five carriers, four landing craft, hundreds of aircraft and thousands of U.S. Marines under the direct command of Admiral Gayler, commander in chief of the U.S. Armed Forces in the Pacific, into South Vietnamese waters, is abnormal. The truth is that the Ford administration does not want to withdraw U.S. military personnel from South Vietnam. If it did, the means that the United States is using to bring weapons to the lackeys and to kidnap children to the United States and other foreign countries are sufficient to evacuate these Americans in a very short time, even in a day, without any difficulty or obstacles.

Ford does not care for the lives of Americans and Vietnamese traitors who serve as lackeys of the United States. The real concern of the Ford administration is to continue the U.S. neocolonialist policy in South Vietnam and to oppose the aspirations of the South Vietnamese people for peace, independence, democracy and national concord and their right to self-determination.

The Ford administration's arguments about the fate of foreign residents, including Americans, and Vietnamese collaborators, are merely hypocrisy and a blatant distortion of the PRGSRV's just and humanitarian policies. The current stand and attitude of the PRGSRV are clearly reflected in the 10-point and seven-point policies which are being implemented in the vast liberated zone, as well as in the 20 April statement on the evacuation of Americans. In its statements of 7, 12 and 20 April 1975, the PRGSRV clearly pointed out that as the South Vietnamese people insured safety for the withdrawal of tens of thousands of U.S. expeditionary troops following the signing of the Paris agreement, there would certainly be no difficulty or obstacle to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel who are illegally present in South Vietnam in the guise of civilians.

To insure safety for Americans, who are but military personnel disguised as civilians, the Ford administration must take them home immediately. If the Ford administration still wants to take advantage of the evacuation of Americans to continue its military involvement and intervention in South Vietnam, it must bear full responsibility before the American people for all consequences arising from its acts.

QUAN DOI NHAN DAN HAI'S LIBERATION OF BINH THUAN PROVINCE

Harold Domestic Service in Vietnamese 0100 GMT 21 Apr 75 SG

[QUAN DOI NHAN DAN 21 April commentary: "Binh Thuan Has Smashed the Last Enemy Defense Line in the Southernmost Part of Trung Bo"]

[Text] Like the waves of the eastern sea mounting gradually, the vigorous offensives and uprisings of the compatriots and combatants in southern Trung Bo have swept away the U.S. neocolonialist war machinery in this important area.